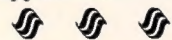


pieces in general, particularly of the impressionistic school, do not translate successfully into vocal numbers —; something of a piece de resistance was made of it by adding violin solo and obbligato, passages for alto soloist, and organ sustaining of the harmony, but repetitions of melodic sections and bad garbling of parts that do not fit vocal transcription clouded rather than clarified the composer's original intentions. (Some of the fault lies with the arranger of the number for chorus.) The final group for the chorus, SONG OF THE FLAME, THE MAN I LOVE, and I GOT RHYTHM were performed in the style of Spitalny's All Girl Choir, and were effective; but ending the program with Gershwin's SUMMERTIME was as poor a selection as the Brahms Waltzes for an opener. Except for the Lithuanian numbers, not one single bit of music legitimately written for girl chorus appeared on the program.

Anna Kaskas was soloist, alto of the Metropolitan Opera Company. Her two Brahms songs for alto, viola, and piano were beautifully done, and her second group of more modern arias and songs effeciently came up to her high reputation. It is amusing to note that most newspapers reviewers devoted most of their words on this concert to the soloist rather than to the chorus. The failings of the group were rather obvious; the spirit and the ambition of these girls are worthy of greater care in selection of program material and a more critical preparation for public appearances. — BL



A VARIED DANCE PROGRAM

By Burton Lawrence

Back in 1939, an article by Clement Greenberg in the PARTISAN REVIEW, an article that pointed out this bit of wisdom: "Where there is an avant-garde, generally we also find a rear-guard", although he might have kept closer to the parallel and called it "a devant-garde". The avant-garde usually searches for the absolute and thus has arrived at absolute or non-objective art. This particular sort of art-for-art's-sake has produced the unintelligible and chaotic in the various art fields, the masterpieces that convey no meaning without an explanation of the intent of the creator; in dancing, the sort of thing that Tudor meant when he said that "choreographers don't know what they are driving at".

But in spite of the abstrusely enigmatic productions in painting, poetry — even in prose — music and dancing that have erupted from the efforts of the avant-garde, low-brows, particularly those who know what they like if not why, owe debt of gratitude to these esoteric experimenters, for the reaction to their incomprehensible erudition provides the impetus for more and better entertainment on the level that requires little or no research for its enjoyment. Folk dancing, ballroom dancing and tap dancing are three forms of this esoteric art — and it is still an art, for art need not be high-brow; the artistry is provided by the acquired and developed skill.

Early in May of this year, Northwestern University's WAA-MU Show, BREAK THE NEWS, included a wide range of dancing. A dancing chorus of twenty four girls contributed several line routines, simple but effective; they were joined in some numbers by a group of boys. Northwestern's Orchestis did a HEADLINES BALLET at the end of the first act, which, if a trifle heterogenous, was still understandable, dramatic and interesting. (Mary O'Connor is the faculty director and Hester Phelan, one of the dancers, is student director.) Joe Bova punctuated the show at just the right place with tap routines that were excellent, and Joe had a good time doing them. Richard Rector in the modern creative idiom did a good job of LOCAL BOY CRASHES BIG CITY.

A week later, University Theatre of the University of Chicago offered several forms of dancing in its performance of NOAH'S LARK, a musical show with clever lines and lyrics except at the denouement, excellent settings, three good tunes, poor music, pathetic orchestrations, and peerless lighting. A dance chorus of three men and seven girls, directed by Sally Morris, did a BUILDING OF THE PREFABS, a routine in the modern creative tradition — traditions arise and grow rapidly in these times, — effective in its symbolism and precision. In the second act, the same group performed EBONY AND IVORY, which, in spite of the very fine lighting effects of Bill Gordon, was not as successful as it might have been; the costumes, though original, did nothing to add to the appearance of the dancers; the choreography, reminiscent of Weidman, was meager — one had the feeling that only the first third of the dance was performed — but what there was of it bore out the dream-intention of the scene. The first scene of the second act contained an extended pantomime enacted by Maynard Wishner, unaccompanied, but carried thru with such an innate rhythmic sense that it easily fell into the classification of artistic dance.

One week later, Chico and Chabela Hernandez performed their Mexican dance at the Lake Shore Club for a luncheon of the Ella Flagg Young Club of Chicago. This charming and attractive couple are rapidly achieving a position of eminence with their lively and colorful dances indigenous to our southern neighbor.

The final meeting of the current season of the Chicago Dance Council brought to Ida Noyes Gymnasium of the University of Chicago campus dance groups representing three distinctive types of dancing on May 18. Orchestis society of the University of Illinois was very generous with its modern dances, choreography by individual students within the group and costumes designed and executed by the dancers themselves. A STUDY: Salutation employing leaps served as a prelude to dance suite that followed the evolution of dance accompaniments. The suite, HISTORY OF DANCE ACCOMPANIMENTS, was made up of (a) PRIMITIVE RHYTHMS employing only percussion instruments; (b) EGYPTIAN MURAL demonstrating dancing to simple melody; (c) PAVANE, GIGUE, AND SARABANDE set to pre-classic instrumental numbers; (d) WALTZ, a very lovely ensemble with polychromatic pastel costumes (wearing of shoes might have increased the smoothness of turns and whirls); (e) a humorous routine, reminiscent of Trudi Schoop at her best and funniest, danced by a group to the reading of sections of Gertrude Stein's PORTRAITS AND PRAYERS; (f) CHING AND MING: BOOK-ENDS, a delectable duet danced to percussion instruments, with a pungent introduction of "Chop-sticks" at the piano near the end; (g) a HOPAK built up of folk figures and Russian folk music; and (h) a final BOLERO to Ravel's music, a colorful and sweeping conclusion to a lovely program. All of these routines were particularly pleasing because design and balance were utilized to give the dances recognizable form, form which in the more extreme of the modern ballets is either absent or so completely submerged that only the initiate can dig it out.

Alma Hawkins' square dance group of the George Williams College brought two squares to perform figures in varied rhythm, telescoping more than one routine into individual numbers for added audience interest. A version of the Spanish waltz used frequently by the International House Folk Dancers, gave a touch of variety to the square dances and made an attractive finale to this part of the program.

Mrs. Ballwebber's class in social dancing at the University of Chicago demonstrated the combining of a

simple dance pattern into an exhibition routine. A Rhumba and a Tango routine were illustrated by individual couples. And finally there was Coronet film of this group explaining simple waltz steps and basic variations of them into a charming waltz routine.

On Sunday, May 25, Mandel Hall housed three new ballets: A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC, THE SHOOTING OF DAN MCGREW, and INQUISITION. The second and third of these are of the genre of experiments, although there is no similarity between them. A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC, choreography by Bentley Stone to music of Mozart, closely follows the Adolph Bohm tradition of conventional abstract ballet. Costumes designed by Walter Camryn, the only male dancer in the ballet, are attractive and effective; timing and pattern are precise; the totality of the production is pleasing and satisfying.

THE SHOOTING OF DAN MCGREW, choreography by Walter Camryn to ragtime music of the first decade of this century, is an experiment somewhat in the style of Weidman's ON MY MOTHER'S SIDE; Bentley Stone read Robert Service's poem, and Camryn acted out the lines impersonating by turns the bartender, the pianist, Dan McGrew, the miner, and the lady that's known as Lou. Camryn has fun doing this routine, and the audience has fun, too.

INQUISITION, choreography by Romola James, music by Granados, settings and costumes by Stanislav Mitruk, is morbidly colorful and vice versa. In depicting an episode of Spanish brutality, the dancers present an idiot, an old woman, a conquette, an old man, a dandy, and other characters from the etchings of Goya; color is used garishly and clashingly in keeping with the brutal keeping of the characters on trial before in questioners. This is the only one of the three ballets which has been presented on any other occasion.

This program marked the end of the current season of programs given by the Renaissance Society of the University of Chicago.

VACATIONS?

By Burton Lawrence

Everywhere across the nation
Folks prepare for their vacation.
Travel guides and hotel folders
Are reviewed by good householders.
Should a week be spent in mountains
Or at swank hotels with fountains?
Different tastes in recreation
Guide the choice of one's vacation.
Should we play some golf or tennis?
Would the canyons be a menace
To the children? Should we travel
Over roads of dust and gravel?
Or should we in planes be flying
High above, or in berths lying
On a train? Anticipation
Comes before a planned vacation.
But where there is moonlight shihing,
Youth and music soft combining
Into mythic dreams of sweetness,
Life attains its full completeness.
Nicest things have sternest endings:
Sternest still our budget spendings
Must be put on strict probation,
Saving up for next vacation.
(Tho we start with good intentions,
Manufacturers inventions
Undermine our cash foundation
Long before next year's vacation.)

THE MEANING OF FOLK DANCE

LEONARD AUSTIN

What is folk dance? What is meant by 'authentic'? These are questions which have agitated teachers of folk lore for years. Whenever leaders and directors gather this subject is discussed pro and con, animatedly and hotly. It will be well now to clarify just what the words 'folk' and 'authentic' mean. For the folklorist there is only one definition. Most leaders take for granted whatever is explained and demonstrated to them as a true folk expression. It would be well for those who are concerned about authenticity to investigate every source of information. A good deal of knowledge of folk expressions is obtained second-hand. A teacher of folk lore should know just what a true folk expression is; the characteristics and peculiarities of the people whose folk life he is trying to interpret.

What is folk? It is an artistic expression of the folk, the people; the native, national, indigenous expression of the soul of the people as produced spontaneously by the people as a whole. No one knows where it came from, or why, except that it is the natural urge in man to dance or sing, or in other words to create.

There are two types of folk lore: one, the living vital stream of expression that is still in the process of growth, alive, rich and un-selfconscious. The other comes under the heading of what used to be called 'popular antiquities'. The latter is interesting from the point of view of history or ethnology. When it is a tangible form; a painting, a bit of pottery, a home or farm utensil, or a costume it belongs in a museum. As a song or dance it belongs in a festival, but should be reproduced exactly as done by the people who created it. In it we perceive the expression of the past of a race or nation. The living folk expression is in a constant state of flux which is right. When this is reproduced as a picture of life today, the history of a nation in microcosm, it also should be done as the people themselves do it. The passion for change and the nervous impatience of Americans are death to the folk expression. If a dance or song is to be changed, they should be changed by the people who created them. I know, of course, that dances have been adopted by other peoples: it has been so in the whole course of history. But a race only adopts a dance or song that expresses its own emotions in some form. A dance or song that is not a true folk expression does not live. That is why in the representation of the living folk lore it is difficult to know just what to reproduce. Much of what is being danced now will be changed in one's lifetime, or be abandoned altogether. The jitter-bug, for example, is an example of what I mean. It is already becoming extinct after having undergone changes and moods as American dancing has ever since the first jazz note was sounded.

The square dance, on the other hand, has been stratified into its present form and will not change. The various types of squares are really now only local ways of expressing the same thing, much like the dialects in speech. The square dance, if done properly, is America. You can see the whole history of America in it—the frontier, the isolated valleys where the descendents of British settlers have preserved intact the dances and ballads of their colonial ancestors, the vast plains, the breeziness, the broad humor. Isn't it significant that in the West, the breezy, talkative West, the caller is of great importance, while in New England the caller is secondary and in Vermont the astringent Green Mountain men have dispensed with the caller altogether. The square dance, the cowboy song, the miner and lumberjack song, the spiritual are authentic folk lore. And he who